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LETTER

TO A

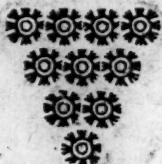
Dissenter in Exeter,

Occasion'd by the

R. E

Late HEATS in those Parts: K.

Upon some Difference of Sentiments
among the Brethren.



Sirs, ye are Brethren: why do ye wrong one to another?
1st vii. 26.

London:

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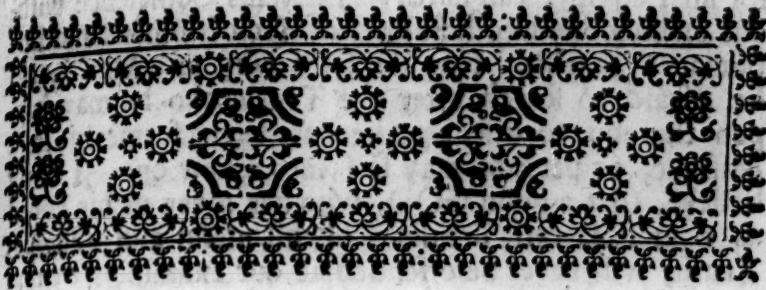
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A LETTER to a Dissenter in Exeter, &c.

SIR,

I AM much troubled at the Account you give me of a Disturbance, which has lately happen'd in your Country, about the abstruse Doctrine of the Trinity. I wish the Gentlemen who have acted with so much Zeal, had thought fit to use a little more Consideration. But, as I judge that a tender Point, I shall not lay it open to the World, by mentioning what you say about it, or by making such Remarks upon it, as, I think, are natural enough. And indeed, 'twould not be fair for a Stranger to pretend to pass a Judgment upon such Transactions, unless he could first have the Accounts, which are given of them by both Sides, fully laid before him; which, I confess, I have not yet been able to obtain. I assure you, I act against my own Inclination, when I comply with your Desire, of giving my Opinion upon this Subject.

You are not indeed mistaken, when you imagine my Thoughts have for some time been turn'd to this Matter; which has made a noise in other Parts of the Na-

tion, besides Exeter. Indeed I believe, an honest Man, and a good Christian, who has Leisure and Advantages for an Enquiry, can hardly satisfy his Conscience without making one into a Subject of such Moment and Importance as this. Nor do I see why any Man should be afraid to search after the Truth, tho he may happen thereby to discover, he has been formerly in a Mistake, or perhaps may fall into a new one. I verily believe, that a good GOD, who has given us his Word as a most sacred Treasury of all useful and religious Truth, will never be offended at our examining by that Rule, all those Notions which have been instill'd into us in our Education: nay I can't help thinking, that He, who requires us to *prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good,* will be less displeas'd with us for the involuntary Mistakes we fall into, while we diligently and impartially search after Truth in the use of all proper Methods; than he will be for our being in right Notions thro mere Accident, or an indulged Slothfulness in not looking into the Evidences and Reasons there are for our Opinion.

I shall be glad if I can offer any thing in this Letter that may be of service to you, in directing you or your Friends in your Conduct, or in helping you over any Doubts or Scruples which I perceive are often suggested to you.

You are sensible, you need not be much moved when you are told, these Matters are too high for Men of your Stations and Employments; and that they ought to be left to the Enquiries of the Learned. Every Christian has an Interest at stake, when the Controversy is about the Supreme Object of Worship, and the Way in which he chuses to be worshipp'd. If there was a different Rule for the Learned and Unlearned, this Objection would be plausible; but since 'tis far otherwise, and there is but one common Rule for all, the meanest Tradesman and poorest Mechanick has as much right to search into these matters, as the profoundest Philosopher. I grant indeed, that some may be under an additional Obligation to study these things, as they are obliged to teach others, and had need therefore have the clearest Notions themselves: But this shews,

no one is unconcern'd. For certainly a Man's Mind must be very awkwardly turn'd, if he can believe this to be a Point of Salvation ; and that yet none but the Learned are concern'd to enquire into it. And why must it be so necessary for such, as are to teach others, to understand it, unless it be necessary for them to teach it their People ? and how can that be necessary, if it be not proper for the People to trouble themselves about it ?

Certainly, if GOD has made a Revelation concerning this matter, it is every Christian's Duty to endeavour to understand it. I confess, Men should search into these things (as they ought into every thing that relates to the great GOD) with much Modesty and Humility ; and not be confident and positive where the Revelation itself is not very plain. You will bear with my freedom, in advising you here, to beware of the Fault you are apt enough to censure in those who differ from you.

I find a Doubt is made, whether Christians may hear, or receive the Sacraments from Ministers, of the Soundness of whose Judgments in these Points they are not fully persuaded. I am sorry there is need to say any thing upon this head ; and am glad, that this is a Scruple only on one side of the Division, which is arisen among you. I wish they, who industriously encourage this Doubt, would a little consider with themselves the Tendency of it, and how ready a way they take endlessly to crumble the Christian Church into Factions and Parties : and perhaps they may, sooner than they are aware, find themselves affected with the Consequences. 'Tis very likely, as you say, they are far from being all agreed in their Scheme : That some of them are of the Mind of *Sabellius*, and believe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be only Three Names of one and the same GOD : And others of them fall in with some Moderns, who make them three distinct Beings, or infinite Spirits. And tho at present these may be join'd with some others, in the general Cry made against those who hold the Word, and Spirit, to be two Beings subordinate to the Supreme GOD, the Father ; yet if once they can run these down, 'tis not improbable they may

may then fall out among themselves, and become as much Hereticks in one another's Opinion, as those they call *Arians* are now in the Opinion of them all. And then some or other of them may find the mischievous Consequences of their present Doctrine, and be themselves deserted of their Hearers according to it. You seem to me therefore to act with a true Christian Prudence, when without regarding the particular Notions your Ministers may have form'd in their Minds, you only observe whether what they say is agreeable to the Scripture-Rule ; and so far only as you perceive 'tis, do assent to them. If your Ministers, in their Sermons, deliver any Doctrine not warranted by the Scriptures, you are not to believe it upon their Authority : and yet that will not bear you out in disowning their Ministry, and refusing to hear them. You must make an allowance to others for their different ways of thinking, as you expect the same should be made to you by others. You must not presently condemn a Minister, or private Christian, because he falls not in exactly with your Scheme of Notions, as long as *he holds the Head*, and orders his Conversation according to the Rule of the Gospel.

The like may be said, in a great measure, with reference to Prayer. What need you trouble yourself what your Minister's Notions are, if you find his Prayers are form'd upon the Christian Model ? If, for instance, his Worship is directed *to* the Father, *thro* the Son, *by* the Holy Ghost ; since you are sure that this is, at least one way, prescribed by the Scripture, what occasion can you have to stick at joining with any part of it ? And if this be the grand Objection which is made against any of your Ministers, I will venture to say, the Objectors are very unaccountable. Tis indeed easy to observe, that the Prayers of Protestants do generally run in this Strain ; and I doubt not, you have often taken notice of it, in the Prayers of those who now shew their Dislike of your Ministers upon this account. But now, supposing any of your Ministers keep to this Method in the main, but in one or two unexpected Expressions vary from it, and you think they have no Direction at all in Scripture for such Expressions ; 'tis easy for you

you to with-hold your Assent to that Part of their Devotions, while you heartily concur with all the rest. Nor will GOD impute to you what they say in their Prayers, which you don't join in.

I confess, Prayer is a Part of Worship which I should especially wish to be so order'd, as that no serious Christian should have the least Difficulty to join in any Part or Expression of it. Nor does it appear to me to be hard for him that prays, so to order it: for he need only keep to the Scripture-Expression, and omit such unnecessary Speculations as Christians are not agreed in.

Those who are tied up to the invariable Use of a prescribed Form, have no room left for their Use of Prudence in this Case. And 'tis a considerable Objection with me, that some part of their Devotions appears utterly disagreeable to the Scripture-Rule: nor can I yet tell how to satisfy my self to be present at the reading of a certain Creed, which I can't believe, (because I can't understand it) and that too when 'tis read as the Belief of all present; and 'tis expected I should testify my Assent by standing. But Dissenters are at liberty to order their Worship with discretion, and have at this time a good Advantage for strengthening their Interest, if they will but keep to their own Principle, and allow that Worship to be best order'd, which most exactly agrees with the Scriptures. This is most likely to be inoffensive, while Men are disputing, and will draw Men of Understanding and Piety over to us: But I shall be amazed, if the Dissenters themselves, who have so long and earnestly contended, that the Scriptures are the only Rule of our Worship, should be uneasy with any of their own Ministers upon such an Account.

One Cause, I perceive, of much of your present Heats is, that some People are very positive in asserting their own Opinion to be a Fundamental Article of the Christian Faith; and that a Man cannot deny it, or be ignorant of it, and yet be in a State of Salvation.

'Tis pity any who within these thirty Years suffer'd themselves considerably, when such artful Insinuations

situations were warmly play'd upon them, should themselves now fly to the Use of them. 'Twould be much more to their purpose, in my Opinion, if they who so zealously assert this, and stun Men with the Charge of *damnable Heresies*, would substitute some manly Arguments and clear Proofs in the place of their fearful Outcries, which are proper only to fright childish Minds. It appears to me very hard to assert, that a Man shall be damn'd merely for his falling into a Mistake, while he sincerely searches after Truth, and his Mistake does not in the least influence his Life, I am glad those of your side in the Dispute, do not give the other any Evidence of the Badness of their Principle by the Immorality of their Behaviour; and I hope 'twill please GOD to make them so watchful and circumspect, as that they never may. And so long as they *keep Consciences void of Offence both toward GOD and Man*, let them not regard being judged by Man, since they know they are the Servants of another Master, who is much more able to judge, and to whose unerring Judgment alone they must either stand or fall.

I am very glad also to hear they keep themselves clear of this Uncharitableness, and take not the Liberty of denouncing Damnation against their Neighbours, in imitation of the Example they set 'em. The Dissenters have been very much provoked, when others have taken this Liberty of judging their whole Body, and without doubt they had good Reason to resent such unchristian Usage. But will not they, who have thus used them, think themselves abundantly justified by the Dissenters themselves, if they see them as severely Censuring one another, not for the worst Heresy, a wicked Life, but for a mere Difference in Opinion? I cannot too much urge you to beware of this mischievous Practice. Tho you have kept clear of it hitherto, yet as the Provocation is very great, you had need watch, that your Resentments do not rise so high as to cause you to retaliate the Injury. Believe it, Sir, those who differ from you, and live according to the Christian Rule, have as much Right to your favourable Sentiments of them, as you have to theirs of you. If their Belief, supposing it to be wrong, influences them

to a due Discharge of their Duty to GOD and Man, their Mistakes shall not be imputed to them, nor hinder their Acceptance with GOD. He will allow for the Prejudices they have inadvertently imbibed, provided they do not overthrow Christian Piety.

But what is more astonishing to me, is, that Men, who have acted with good Sense and Moderation, should appear so infallibly certain in a Matter, which, by their own Confession, is very abstruse, and which they themselves hardly know how to express: and especially that they should be so assuming of GOD's Prerogative, as to judge the State of Men without knowing their Hearts. Let their Notion of the Point in dispute be ever so true and just, yet there is least Danger on the charitable Side. If they should hope well of sober and virtuous Men whose Notions they could not approve; if they should think them in a State of Salvation while really they were not; such a charitable Error as this could do them no harm: but on the contrary, if they should happen to censure their Neighbours as the Firebrands of Hell, while they are sincere toward GOD, and such as he will receive to his everlasting Kingdom; that's an Error of a very different nature, and I need not set before them the Danger of it.

But my Wonder is yet more rais'd, when I consider upon what slight Grounds they build their confident Assertion, that their Opinion is a Fundamental, or Essential Article of the Christian Faith. There are two Things which seem to be absolutely necessary to denominate any Doctrine a fundamental Article of Faith; neither of which agrees to this they lay down as such, at least as far as I have been able to perceive hitherto.

First, That the Doctrine be deliver'd expressly in so many Words in the Holy Scriptures. A Doctrine may be a Truth, and well collected from the Holy Scripture; and whoever sees the Evidence of the Reasoning whereby 'tis infer'd, is bound to believe it: but yet every such Truth may not be an Article of Faith. GOD has made the Articles of Faith plain and obvious to the meanest Capacity; and they are not to be gather'd by doubtful Reasonings and Argumentations, but are declared in plain and express Words. But

where, in all the Bible, are we to seek for this express Declaration of the Opinion of these positive Gentlemen? Don't they build their Notion upon obscure Hints, very doubtful Reasonings, and uncertain Conclusions? One would think the very nature of the Proof they bring, should be enough to satisfy any Man, that their Opinion cannot possibly be a Fundamental of Christianity. And I doubt not that is one Reason, why they care not much to hazard the Reputation of their *Tenet*, by exposing publickly the Proofs they pretend to have for it.

Secondly, Another thing necessary to make any Doctrine fundamental and essential to Salvation, is, not only that it be true and plainly reveal'd, but that it have so much stress laid upon it in the Holy Scriptures. I mean 'tis necessary, that the believing it should by the Scriptures be made the Condition of eternal Salvation, or the not believing it be threatned with eternal Damnation. But as you have not acquainted me with the Texts they bring to this purpose; so neither can I at present guess, in what part of my Bible I am to look for them.

Besides, if their *Tenet* is now a fundamental Article of the Christian Faith, I would gladly know, whether they hold it to have been so before the fourth Century. It would be very odd, if they should pretend a Doctrine could then begin to be Fundamental which was not so before. And 'twould be very strange, if this Doctrine was all along Fundamental, that there should be none found before the fourth Century who believed there was any Truth in it, except perhaps *Sabellius* and *Paulus Samosatenus*, &c. I do not urge this, as tho the Opinion of the Antients were to be our Rule, but only to move them to a more compassionate Judgment of the State of their Brethren's Souls. For I hope they will be content, that those of your Mind should be able to get to Heaven, rather than send all the Primitive Christians, except some few Hereticks, down to the infernal Flames.

But I will now come a little closer to the grand Point in Debate among you. 'Tis agreed on both sides, That there is but one G O D; that is, but one supreme, unoriginated, infinitely perfect Spirit, from whom all other Beings are derived. The contro-
verted

verted Question is, whether, as you pretend, the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, be this one GOD; or whether, as the other side alledges, the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost constitute this one GOD; and consequently that an adequate full Idea, or Conception of the Father of Christ, is not a full and adequate Idea of GOD.

For the deciding this Question, the Scriptures alone are to be consulted. 'Tis possible I may be mistaken, as well as another Man; nor would I be over-confident: but I think I was never more mistaken in my whole Life than I am now, if these Gentlemen have clear Evidence, from Scripture, of the Truth of the Doctrine which they with so much Assurance declare for, and the Belief of which they pretend is absolutely necessary to Salvation.

I shall here mention a few Texts, which most plainly speak of the Father as the one GOD, and that in contradistinction to Jesus Christ. The first I shall take notice of, is, *1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6.* *We know that an Idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other GOD but one. For tho there be that are call'd Gods, whether in Heaven or in Earth, (as there be Gods many, and Lords many) yet to us there is but one GOD, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.* You will please to observe, Sir, how proper a Place this is for us to look into, in order to understand whom the inspir'd Apostle took to be the one GOD, in the most eminent and proper Sense of the Word. He is here treating concerning this very Matter, and purposely asserting the Unity of the Godhead, in opposition to such Beings as might in a looser sense have that Appellation given to them. There can therefore be no reasonable Doubt, that here, if anywhere, he would most punctually and plainly tell us, who this one GOD is. And can any Mortal give a Reason why the Apostle, if he had been of the Mind of your severe Censurers, should not have express'd himself thus; *But to us there is but one GOD, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?* Is there not then here a manifest Snare in his Words, as they now stand.

if we suppose these three make but one GOD? When he says there is but one GOD, and that one GOD is the Father, does he not as fully exclude the Son and Holy Ghost from being that one GOD, as Words can do it? For instance, suppose I say there is but one Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Ward; do I not hereby as certainly exclude all others, as tho I named them particularly? Besides, 'tis plain in this Text St. Paul speaks of the Father in contradistinction to Jesus Christ his Son, whom he stiles the *one Lord*. In which Words, as Mr. Joseph Mede has observed, he alludes to the Theology of the Heathen, who had several superior, or sovereign, and several inferior Deities; and his intention is to declare that Christians had but one of each sort, that is, one absolutely sovereign GOD, and one Lord or Mediator, by whom to come to him.

To this I shall therefore add that Text, *1 Tim. ii. 5.* *For there is one GOD, and one Mediator between GOD and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.* And can any one think St. Paul would express himself thus darkly, without adding any farther Explication, if he meant that Jesus Christ was not distinct from that one GOD, or if he apprehended that Christ was a Mediator between himself and Men?

Again, *Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.* *There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one GOD and Father of all, who is above all, and thro all, and in you all.* You see all the three Persons are here distinctly mention'd, but the Godhead is attributed peculiarly to the Father; and he, as distinguish'd from the other Persons, is said to be the one GOD.

Again, how expressly does our Saviour himself acknowledge the Father to be the only true GOD? *John xvii. 3.* *This is Life eternal, that they might know THEE the only true GOD, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* If the Father, to whom Christ there speaks, as distinguish'd from Christ whom he sent, be the only true GOD, how can Christ be the only true GOD also? Is it possible there should be two, who should each of them be the only true GOD?

To this let me add, Rom. xvi. 27. *To GOD only wise [or the alone wise God] be Glory through Jesus Christ for ever, Amen.* I suppose 'twill admit of no dispute, whether that GOD to whom we are to give Glory thro Jesus Christ, be the Father. If then he alone be the wise (that is infinitely wise) GOD, this cannot be said of any other Person ; but whatever Wisdom he does communicate to the Son or Spirir, yet Wisdom must be peculiarly and more eminently in himself.

The like may be said of another Text, Rev. xv. 4. *For thou alone art holy : wherein the Perfection of Holiness is asserted to be peculiar to him.* If any should doubt, whether these Words belong only to the Father ; there are two things which may satisfy him : 1. That in the Verse before, the same Person has the Title of *avlonga'rap*, which we render *Almighty*, but which imports his being *supreme over all*, and is never attributed to the Son ; and Bishop Pearson himself acknowledges it belongs to the Father. 2. Another Thing that proves this, is, That the Song it self, of which this is a Part, is call'd *the Song of Moses, and the Lamb* ; which must import that *Moses* and the *Lamb* sing it, and thus praise him, who alone is holy. And who can that be but the Father ?

I might add other Texts : but I think these are sufficient for the present. The thing is really so plain and evident, that the most zealous Defenders of the Doctrine of three Persons in one common Godhead, have themselves been free to grant, that the Father is often call'd GOD by way of Eminency. And I hope you will not be esteem'd damnably guilty, for acknowledging him to be what he is often call'd. Such Proofs as these, which are so very plain and express, are worth a thousand others (if your Opposites had so many) which are only the Inferences and Consequences of fallible Men, drawn from obscure Places of Scripture, which at best can be reckon'd only doubtful Hints of a Matter, which they cannot pretend is in any one Place clearly and positively asserted ; as yet it certainly would be, if it were, as they pretend, a fundamental Article of the Christian Faith.

It

It would perhaps be counted impertinent by your Opposites, should I take notice of the Passages of Scripture wherein the Father is said to be greater than the Son, and the Subordination of the Son to the Father is in the most lively manner described. These are all blown away, as they think, by saying those Passages are to be understood of him as having humbled himself, and become Mediator. I confess this Answer does not much satisfy me ; nor can I conceive how 'twas possible for the WORD, if he had been originally equal to the Father, to have humbled himself so as to become inferiour to him. His taking human Flesh upon him could not make any Alteration of his Divinity, nor lessen the Perfection of that, or his Equality with the Father. Besides, if the Inequality were only the Consequence of his being Mediator, it would of necessity cease together with his Mediatorship ; whereas nothing is more certain, than that it will not : but even after that, he will be in subjection to the Father ; *1 Cor. xv. 24. Then cometh the End, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to G O D, even THE FATHER.* Ver. 27, 28. *He hath put all things under his Feet : But when he saith, all things are put under him, 'tis manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be SUBJECT UNTO HIM that put all things under him, that G O D M A Y B E ALL IN ALL.*

However, I will not insist upon these things, since there are other Evidences to be produced, which will not admit of any such Reply. Only before I pass on to them, I beg leave to observe to you, that those good Men, who are so very angry with you, seem themselves to be guilty of that which they charge you with ; I mean, that their Notion really tends to lessen Mens Sense of the Obligations we are under to Jesus Christ for his great Condescension and Kindness, and of the exceeding great Virtue of his Death and Sacrifice. I make no doubt, this is far from being their Design ; and that as in the mean time they heartily thank G O D for Christ, as the greatest Instance of his Love, and entirely depend upon his Mediation, they will be saved by him, notwithstanding their Mistake. But if we consider

sider things as they are in their own Nature, and compare thele Persons Notions with yours, what I say most, I think, appear to be true.

The only Condescension they can speak of, is, that of the W O R D's becoming related to a human Body and Soul, without the least Alteration or real Abasement of his Divine Nature. The Sufferings must be the Sufferings only of his human Nature, tho that Nature was related to the W O R D ; but the W O R D himself is supposed impassible, and consequently unaffected therewith : So that the whole lies in his being related to the human Nature, which only suffer'd. But what an astonishing View does the other Notion give us of Love and Condescension ? When we consider the W O R D not indeed as equal to the Father, but the most glorious of all Beings, and next to him, the *Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person*, who had a *Glory with him before the World was, and by whom G O D made the Worlds* : When we consider him, I say, as taking upon him human Flesh, as really emptying himself, according to the Expression, *Phil. ii. 7.* when we think of him in whom were hid the *Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*, and who is stiled, *The Wisdom and Power of G O D*, as divested of these Perfections for a time, and putting himself into the Condition of poor mortal Men ; wherein he was to learn and increase in Wisdom as they do ; wherein He himself who made the Worlds, should have no power to do any thing, and should need the Spirit of G O D to work his Miracles, and the Assistance of Angels to comfort him ; and wherein himself should be afflicted, suffer, and die : There is nothing may more justly raise our Wonder at G O D's Love, or our Saviour's Abasement. This gives the most full View of the Worth of his Propitiation and Atonement : And well may we now say, *Behold what manner of Love the Father has bestow'd upon us !* Certainly no Wonder in Heaven or Earth can be compared to this : And we cannot think it strange, that St. Paul should be so apt in his Epistles to digress from his Subject upon his occasionally mentioning it ; which, I hope, will be an Apology for my running into this Digression : From which I will now return.

However

However plausible then the Answers may seem to be to your Arguments for the Subordination or Inferiority of the Son to the Father, yet those which are as plain for the Subordination or Inferiority of the Holy Ghost, will not admit of any such Evasion; since they cannot reply, That he is either Man or Mediator. If therefore GOD's giving his Son, or sending him, do not prove that he had Authority over him, as a Divine Person, because they only relate to Christ as he was Man; I would desire to know what is the Import of those Expressions, where the Father is said to give and send the Holy Ghost: or how they will account for Christ the Mediator's receiving and sending him, upon his Prayer to the Father. Must not a Person be supposed to have an Authority over one whom he gives, whom he sends? Or would, do we think, the Scriptures speak of the Spirit to us in such Expressions, if they were to be understood in a Sense utterly different from that in which we constantly use them, and which no Man is able to this very Day to discover and find out? This is the rather not to be allow'd, because it is not barely the Language of some dark Prophecies of the Bible; but the constant Stile of it, even there where the most plain and easy things are delivered. I have not set down the Places here, wherein GOD is said to give, to send, to pour out his Spirit, or wherein Christ is said to send him; nor the Places wherein he is called the Spirit of GOD, and the Spirit of Christ, &c. They are so frequent in the New Testament, that every Christian, who reads it, must be acquainted with them. Now all these plainly speak a Subordination of the Spirit to the Father, and Son as Mediator, and consequently that he is not equal to the Father, or Son. I shall close this Argument with those Words of Christ himself, which are full to my purpose; *John xvi. 13, 14, 15.* When he, the Spirit of Truth, *is come, he will guide you into all Truth:* For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; *and he will shew you things to come.* *He shall glorify me;* for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. *All things that the Father hath, are mine: therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* And can it be

be thought that this is Language proper to be used of the Supreme G O D ? Where do we find the Father spoken of in such a Stile ? Is it answerable to the Dignity of one equal with the Father, *not to speak of himself ; and to speak only what he bears ?* How plainly are all things here ultimately referred to the Father, and immediately to Christ ? The Spirit receives from Christ what he shews, and so he glorifies him by shewing the things of Christ : But are these things of Christ, his own originally ? No, they are the Father's ; and therefore he says, *All things that the Father hath, are mine :* And if you would know how he came by them, he tells you, *John iii. 35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* And again, *John v. 19, 20. Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do ; for what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise : For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth.* So that lay these Texts together, and it appears, That the Father shews to the Son what the Son shews to the Spirit ; that the Father gives to the Son, and the Son to the Spirit ; that the Spirit says nothing of himself, but what he has from Christ ; and Christ speaks those things which he had heard of his Father ; *John xv. 15.*

Thus I have given you a View of some of those Arguments which prevailed with me to believe the Father is the one only Supreme G O D : 'Tis not my part to judge for other Men. I hope, till these are answer'd, I may, notwithstanding my Opinion, pass for an honest Man, and one who is willing to know the Truth, and has not been unconcerned to search for it. And this I can truly say, that had I been able to perceive that the worthy Persons on the other side the Controversy had as clear and solid Proofs as these to support their Opinion, I should at least have suspended my Judgment, or perhaps have been bias'd in some measure by the Differencce I am apt to pay them. But when I see plainly they are not able to express their Opinion in the Words of the Holy Ghost, I am at a loss to excuse their Arrogance in pretending to lay such a stress upon it as they do. And that you may see I have examined the

Arguments on both sides, I will now consider some of the chief which they use to alledge.

I. One grand Argument which they bring to maintain that Doctrine, is that Verse which we read in our Translation; *I John v. 7.* *For there are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.* To which they add those Words of Christ, *John x. 30.* *I and my Father are one.* The former of these Passages is controverted whether it belongs to the sacred Text; or rather 'tis past all Controversy, that it does not. But I will not enter into that Dispute, or urge the Incoherence of the Words with the Context, or the Strangeness of the Matter they contain, or their not being cited on either Side by the Writers in the *Arian* Controversy, for about a Century after it was started; or their not appearing in any *Greek* Manuscript, or any of the old Versions of the New Testament. These things you may find consider'd at large by others, who have, I confess, satisfy'd me.* But I will answer the Argument they bring from these Words, upon the Supposition of their being the genuine Writing of St. John; and the rather because if that be allow'd, they express no more than what Christ himself expresses concerning two of the Three in that other Text they bring, the *Guineness* of which was never call'd in question.

Now much stress has been laid upon the Manner of the Expression in both Places, in the former *ἐν εἷς*, in the latter *ἐν ἕστεν*; *one*, say these Men, that is, *one thing*. But there is a considerable Defect in the Method they take to interpret these Passages; and that is, that they confirm not their Interpretation by Parallel Places of Scripture, nor shew that thus the Expression is used in other Texts, where the Sense is not dubious.

It must be owned, that an Unity is asserted in the Texts under Consideration; but then the Question is, What kind of Unity that is? 'Tis evident, that an Unity of Essence, or Being, is not the subject Matter of

* *A Full Enquiry into the Original Authority of I John v. 7.*
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he Discourse in either Place : Why then should we fix upon such an Unity as is unintelligible, rather than upon such a one as is easy and natural, and suited to the Scope of the Writer ? Why should it not be enough to say, that these Persons are one by Consent and Agreement in their Testimony, or in their Design, and the Exercise of their Power ? Such an Unity as this no one can question, or be puzzled to understand ; and why should not this be thought sufficient to satisfy the Design of those Texts ? Can any Man deny that this Expression is used elsewhere in the New Testament exactly in the same manner ? For instance, when St. Paul says, *1 Cor. iii. 8. Now he that planteth, and he that watereth are one, ἐν εισι* : Does he mean that he and Apollos were one Being ? Certainly 'tis enough to say, they were one in their Design ; and why then must we take the Words otherwise, when spoken of the Father and Son ?

And if any object, that every Writer has his peculiar way of expressing himself ; and that therefore 'tis fairest to compare St. John's Expressions with his own, rather than with St. Paul's ; I hope he will be satisfy'd with these that follow : *John xvii. 11. Holy Father, keep thro thine own Name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, ὡσεὶς ἡμῖν, as we are.* And are we to think, that our Saviour desired his Disciples should be kept to be one Being ? Was it any other than Unity of Agreement, Design, and Love, that he prayed should be among them ? And when Christ so expressly resembles the Unity he desired should be between them to that between himself and the Father, is not this a clear Evidence how the same Expression is to be understood in the other Place, where he says, *I and my Father are one ?* Can it be imagined that our Saviour would be understood thus ; *Keep those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one by Agreement, as thou and I are one, not in Agreement, only but in Essence and Being ?* Indeed the Words of our Lord plainly overthrow this Interpretation ; for they must be thus understood : Keep them, that they, tho distinct and different Beings, may yet by Agreement be one, even as thou and I, tho distinct Beings, are yet one by perfect Agreement, &c.

We have afterwards the same Expression over and over ; ver. 21, 22, 23. where our Lord prays thus for those who should believe on him, *That they all may be one, ὡς οὐ, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one, ἐν ὑμῖν, in us, that the World may believe that thou hast sent me.* And the Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, ὡς ἡμεῖς, as we are one, ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. *I in them, and they in me, that they may be made perfect in one, εἰς ἐν, that the World may know that thou hast sent me.* With this last Expression agrees that Prophecy which Caiaphas utter'd, John xi. 52. That Christ should die, not for the Nation of the Jews only, but that also he should gather together in one, εἰς ἐν, the Children of G O D which are scattered abroad : Where surely the Meaning is not, that he should gather them together into one Being, but into one People, consisting of several particular Persons and distinct Beings. To which likewise agrees that of St. Paul, Eph. ii. 14. *For he is our Peace, who hath made both one, ὁ τόντος τὰ αὐτούς τε τὰς ἐν ;* that is, he has made the Jews and Gentiles to be both one, not one Being, but one with reference to spiritual Privileges and Advantages, there being no further Distinction made between them.

I shall only add, that were it the Design of that Place John x. 30. to express such an Unity of the Father and Son, as some Men pretend, I am apt to think the Word would have been put in the *Masculine*, and not in the *Neuter Gender*. Thus when St. Paul would speak of Christians as all united to Christ, and together forming a kind of mystical Person, he chuses to express himself in the masculine Gender ; *For ye are all one, εἰς ἕν, in Christ Jesus* ; Gal. iii. 28. See Mr. Locke upon that and the following Verse, and compare what the Apostle says, Ver. 16. Thus also the three Evangelists, *There is none good but one, εἰς, that is, G O D* ; Mat. xix. 17. Mark x. 18. Luke xviii. 19.

II. Another Argument which they bring to prove their Doctrine, is, That Christ is expressly called *God*, in several Places of the Scripture. And here they tell us, that the Scripture calling him so often *God*, must mean that he is *God* in the same sense with the Father, or

or else it lays a Snare to lead us by that unguarded Expression into an Error of dangerous Consequence.

To this I answer, that as 'tis certain the Scripture several times gives him the Title of God; so what they urge would be just, did it not evidently lead us to distinguish his Godhead from that of the Father. To clear this, let me observe, that the Word GOD is not always of the same Import and Signification in the Scripture. It is indeed oftnest given to him, who is in the most strict, proper, and eminent Sense, GOD, that is, the Father; but 'tis sometimes attributed to others.

Thus 'tis applied to the Heathen Idols, in compliance with the false Notions of their Worshippers, who supposed them to have a real Divinity, and to be the proper Objects of their Worship. And again 'tis sometimes used of such as wickedly and impiously act, as tho they were Gods. Thus *the Man of Sin*, 1 Thes. ii. 4. is said *as God to sit in the Temple of GOD, shewing himself that he is a God*; that is, he assumes the Authority and Power of a God. And thus the Devil is called *the God of this World*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. upon the account of that Power and Authority which he has usurped, and which he exercises in the World.

In these Cases the Term God is apply'd to things, upon the Pretence of somewhat belonging to them, which really does not. But there are other Places wherein this Name is given to some upon the account of a Character which they rightfully pretend to, and bear without any Blame. And these, though they are not the supreme GOD, yet cannot be called false Gods.

Now there are two things which seem to be the Reasons why this Title is ever given to any. 1. The extraordinary Excellence and Dignity of their Beings. 2. Their being authorized and appointed by GOD to act in his stead, to administer and order Affairs, or to rule for him. One, or both of these will, I believe, be always found in those to whom this Name is given in Scripture without a *Catachresis*. Thus, for instance, the Angels are called Gods, which may be partly upon the account of the superior Excellence and Dignity of their Nature, and partly from their being employ'd

ploy'd by GOD as Ministers in his Kingdom, to order Affairs here below.

Psalm xcviij. 7. *Worship him all ye Gods.* Psal. viii. 5. *Thou hast made him a little Lower than the Gods,* as it is in the Hebrew. Again, Men are said to be Gods to those of the same Nature with themselves, upon the account of their being authorized by GOD to act in his stead. Thus *Moses* is said to be made a God to Pharaob, *Exod.* vii. 1. and to be instead of a God to Aaron, *Exod.* iv. 16. And thus an earthly Judge is call'd God, *1 Sam.* ii. 25. *If one Man sin against another, God [the Judge] shall judge him; but if a Man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him?* And upon this account Magistrates are call'd Gods; *Psal. Ixxxii. 1.* *GOD standeth in the Congregation of the Mighty: he judgeth among the Gods.* Ver. 6. *I have said ye are Gods.*

The Reason why the Name of God is given to such Persons, seems to be, that upon the account of their being far advanced above the Rank of ordinary Men by their Dignity and Authority, a sort of Worship, that is, peculiar Honour and Respect, is due to them. I think the Scripture leads me into this Notion; to which purpose I will here cite two Texts. The first is that, *2 Thess. ii. 4.* *Who opposeth, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipp'd; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of GOD, shewing himself that he is God.* In which Words St. Paul, if I do not misunderstand him, adds that latter Expression, or that is worshipp'd, *ἵν σέβασμα*, as an Explanation of the former, *that it is called God;* so that any one to whom such kind of Worship as he speaks of is due, may be call'd God. Now this Worship is not the same that is due to the supreme GOD. 'Tis thought by perhaps the best Interpreters of the Place, that the Word *Σέβασμα* carries in it an Allusion to the Name which was then given familiarly to the *Roman Emperor*, *Σέβαστος, Act. xxv. 21, 25.* and that therefore he here means particularly Magistrates, to whom Worship, that is, a distinguish'd Honour and Respect, was due, agreeably to that Power and Authority with which they were intrusted. Thus the Commentator upon this Place

place in the Continuation of Mr. Pool's Annotations ;
 " He lifteth up himself above all that is called God,
 " tho' not really and essentially God. The Apostle
 " well knew, that in the Old Testament Magistrates
 " were called Gods, *Psal. lxxxii. 1, 6.* and *1 Cor. viii.*
 " 5. *There be that are called Gods, whether in Heaven*
 " *or in Earth.* Magistrates and Rulers are of several
 " Degrees, some inferior, some superior, some supreme,
 " as Kings and Emperors ; but he exalteth himself
 " above them all, &c." Compare Mr. S. Clark's An-
 notations upon the Place. The other Text which I shall
 alledge, is our Saviour's Gloss upon *Psal. lxxxii. 6.* by
 which he vindicated himself against the Jews, who
 charged him with Blasphemy for saying, he was the
 Son of G O D ; and thus he discourses, *John x. 34.*
Jesus answer'd them, Is it not written in your Law, I
said, Ye are Gods ? If he called them Gods, unto whom
the Word of G O D came, and the Scripture cannot be
broken ; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified
and sent into the World, thou blasphemest, because I said,
I am the Son of G O D ? He calls them Gods to whom the
Word of G O D came, that is, says the aforesaid Anno-
 tator, " Them who had a Commission to govern the
 " People according to the Law of G O D."

And certainly what I have said is enough to account
 for Christ's being call'd God in the Scripture, even tho'
 it be supposed, that he is not equal to the supreme G O D
 his Father. For if any one may in a just and good
 Sense be call'd God besides the Father, unquestionably
 Christ, who is next to him in the Excellency of his Na-
 ture, and who has the most universal Power and Au-
 thority committed to him, must have the highest Right
 to that Appellation. And I would be glad any one
 would give me a Reason, why our Saviour might not
 have apply'd that Text which he brings to vindicate
 his calling himself the Son of God, as well to his calling
 himself God, if he had so call'd himself, and the Jews
 had objected against him upon that account. Indeed
 the Psalmist speaks of Magistrates under both Titles ;
I have said ye are Gods, and all of you Children of the
most High ; but our Saviour leaves out the latter, and
argues à fortiori, as they call it ; that is, his Argument

is, that it could not be Blasphemy for him to call himself the Son of GOD, because it would not have been Blasphemy for him to have call'd himself God, which would have sounded much harsher in the Jews Ears. Now he proves that it would not have been Blasphemy to have call'd himself God, not by alledging that he was supreme GOD, and essentially one with the Father, as our modern Divines plead; but his Reason is, because the Title of God is given by the supreme GOD himself to Magistrates, to such to whom the Word of GOD came: and therefore he shews them, that it was very unreasonable for them to charge him with Blasphemy for saying, that he whom GOD had sanctified and sent into the World was the Son of GOD. Such a special and extraordinary Commission then as Christ received from GOD, would alone justify his being call'd God, even supposing he had not had those transcendent Qualifications of Nature which the Scripture assures us he had.

I would now further shew you, that notwithstanding his being call'd God, he is distinguish'd from the supreme GOD, and that in some of those Places wherein this Title is given him. Thus when the WORD is call'd God, in the beginning of St. John's Gospel, 'tis expressly said, the WORD was with GOD, and the Word was a God. And is not that God who was the Word, plainly distinguish'd from the GOD with whom in the Beginning he was? Was God the Word the same with him with whom he was? Does the Evangelist design to tell us, that the WORD was with himself? Who ever talks after that rate? If this were his design, why was not that Expression, *And the WORD was with GOD*, intirely left out? Does it add any thing to the Sense, provided the next Expression is thus to be understood, *And the WORD was the supreme God?* Whatever the meaning is of being with GOD according to these Men, was it possible that he should be otherwise than with him, if he had the same individual Essence or Substance with him?

Thus again the Psalmist calls him God, *Psal. xlv. 7.* as the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews shews, *Chap. i. 8. But unto the Son he saith, Thy Throne, O God,*

God, is for ever and ever ; but if we read on, is it not evident, that he is not the supreme GOD? Ver. 9. *Thou hast loved Righteousness and hated Iniquity, therefore GOD, even thy GOD, [or O God, thy GOD]* hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy Fellows. And can he be the supreme GOD, who has one to be a God to him, and to bestow a Reward upon him? Is not this a sufficient Caution to us, not to apprehend that he is equal or co-ordinate with the Father? especially considering the general Strain and Tenor of the New Testament, which speaks often of the Father, as the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; which reckons Christ to be GOD's, in the same manner as it reckons Christians to be Christ's, 1 Cor. iii. 23. which in the same manner sets forth GOD's being the Head of Christ, as it does Christ's being the Head of every Man, or the Man's being the Head of the Woman, 1 Cor. xi. 3. Does it bespeak no Subordination, when Christ says, John xiv. 28. *My Father is greater than I?* And if I signifies his whole Person, and in his divine Nature he was equal to the Father, how can his Words be true? Besides, what less than a Subordination or Subjection to the Father does Christ express in those Words, John vi. 38. *For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me?* This cannot be understood of him as Man ; for it relates to his very taking our Flesh, and therefore proves that as God the WORD, antecedently to his Incarnation, he was subject to the Will of his Father, and consequently was not equal to him.

III. Another Argument they bring, is from the high Strain in which St. Paul speaks of him as God, Rom. 9. 5. *Who is over all, God blessed for ever.* To this I answer, that Christ is so great and glorious a Person, that 'tis not easy to speak of him in too high a Strain, provided only that he be spoken of as subordinate to his Father. And therefore I need only apply the same Apostle's Words concerning the same thing, and they will serve for a full Reply to this Argument ; 1 Cor. xv. 27. *But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.*

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IV. They argue from the Work of Creation's being several times attributed to him ; *John i. 3.* *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Compare *Col. i. 16.* *John i. 10.* And they confirm their Argument with that Text, *Heb. iii. 4.* *He that built all things is GOD.* That Christ is God, is readily granted ; and that none but the supreme GOD could create the World by an un-derived Power, is acknowledg'd also. But that Christ made the World by a Power which he did not derive from his Father, is what they ought to prove. This, I think, they will never be able to prove, because 'tis contrary to the Scripture, which expressly speaks of the Father's making things by Christ, *Heb. i. 2.* *By whom [his Son] also be made the Worlds.* *Eph. iii. 9.* *GOD created all things by Jesus Christ.* And 'tis evident that the Sense of the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in that third Chapter is, that the Father is to be consider'd as the primary Creator, that Christ is only as a Son over GOD's House, and *Moses* only as a Servant. And how this agrees with an Equality, let such consider as assert it.

V. It is alledged that Omnipotence is an incommunicable Attribute of GOD, and that Christ must be GOD equal with the Father, because he was possell'd of it. This, say they, appears by St. Peter's Words to him, *John xxi. 17.* *Lord, thou knowest all Things, thou knowest that I love thee.* And here he appeals to him as one that knew his Heart ; and our Saviour himself expressly claims this, *Rev. ii. 23.* *All the Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the Reins and Hearts.* But this, as they urge, is assumed by GOD as his Property and Prerogative ; *Jer. xvii. 9, 10.* *The Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it ? I the Lord search the Heart, I try the Reins.* Whoever therefore, say they, can search the Heart must be the most high GOD. But who has given us Assurance that a Power to search Men's Hearts and know their Thoughts is incommunicable ; and that GOD so has it as that he cannot impart it ? I find that he imparted this sometimes to his Prophets in particular Cases ; and why might he not impart it in all to his Son ?

Son? What our Saviour did in this Case, as well as all others, was only what the Father taught him, Job. viii. 28. *Te shall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of my self; but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things.* And supposing it could be proved, that Christ knew all things, yet unless it could be proved that he knew them of himself, and by a Power underived from the Father, it would not be sufficient to establish their Conclusion of his being equal to the Father.

But the thing it self may be justly question'd; and if it appears to be evident, that he did not know all things, this will be a Demonstration of the Mistake of their Opinion.

I do not think St. Peter's Words will bear the Stress they lay upon them. Such Forms of Speech are common in ordinary Discourse; we are apt to say of a wise Man and a great Scholar, that he understands or he knows all things, when we would not have our Expressions understood with the utmost Strictness. There is no Language which does not allow for such hyperbolical Ways of speaking; and more especially was this usual among the Jews. I will here for an Instance only set down the Words of the Widow of Tekoah to King David; and let the Reader judge by them whether they allow'd of such ways of speaking: 2 Sam. xiv. 17. *As an Angel of GOD, so is my Lord the King to discern good and bad.* Ver. 19. *As thy Soul liveth, my Lord the King, none can turn to the right hand or the left from all that my Lord the King hath spoken.* Ver. 20. *My Lord is wise, according to the Wisdom of an Angel of GOD, to know all things that are done in the Earth.* I hope they who lay such a Stress upon St. Peter's Words, and think that our Saviour must have contradicted him, if he had acted honestly, provided he had not really known all things, will allow that David did not act dishonestly, tho he never contradicted the Widow of Tekoab in her Sayings concerning him.

But to come closer to them; if there was any one thing which our Lord did not know, he cannot be said to have been Omniscent. And how can your zealous Opposers assert that he did know, when the Day of Judgment would be? How express are the Words of

Christ himself as related by St. Matthew, Chap. xxiv. 36. *But of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man [no one, & deis] no not the Angels in Heaven, but my Father only.* And yet more express is St. Mark, Chap. xiii. 32. *But of that Day and that Hour knoweth no one, no, not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* But it seems by the Father must be understood the Son as well as the Father, for the serving an Hypothesis. But they think they have a Salvo for this, when they answer, that the Son did not know of that Day and Hour as Man, tho he did as he was GOD. But to that I reply,

1. That as God he was not the Father, and yet he does not say, no one knows it but GOD, but no one knows it but the Father. If therefore the Son had known it as God, our Saviour's Words had not been true.

2. The very Notion they go upon is not proved, but taken for granted, that our Saviour knew some things as Man, and other things as God. 'Tis not yet proved, that he had any rational Soul distinct from the Word, which may well be understood to supply the Place of an human Soul.

3. The Answer they give does not appear pertinent to our Saviour's Design. The Disciples had ask'd him privately *when those things should be* he had been speaking of, and *what should be the Sign of his coming, and of the End of the World.* Christ gives them Information of the Sign of the approaching Fulfilment of those things, the Destruction of Jerusalem, but not of the Sign of his coming to the final Judgment; and he in those Words gives them a plain reason, why he did not acquaint them when that would be; and that was because he did not himself know. But if we understand Christ according to the modern Interpretation, this Answer of his was a mere Evasion; and the Disciples, who at other times are supposed so thoroughly acquainted with his being Omniscent, might have easily answer'd him: "Well, Lord, if thou dost not know it as thou art Man, and so canst not tell us as such, yet tell it us as GOD, since as GOD thou dost assuredly know when it will be." And without doubt the Disciples, who were inquisitive to know that time, would have so reply'd upon

upon him, if they had entertain'd any such Notion; for they must have been very sensible, that, according to it, he had at other times openly and plainly declared the Thoughts of such as were about him, which he must be suppos'd to have known as he was GOD, and not as he was Man.

VI. The next grand Plea which I perceive is used by your Antagonists, and is indeed commonly urged by those of the same Principles, is taken from that *Worship*, which is to be given to Christ. Here they think they may triumph. The express Scripture-Rule, say they, is *Matth. iv. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy GOD, and him ONLY shalt thou serve.* Worship, according to their View, is here appropriated to the supreme GOD, and therefore Christ must be such, since Worship is to be given to him. And they plead, that the worshipping Christ must be downright Idolatry, unless he be indeed the most High GOD.

I hope, they who alledge this Objection will allow of a Distinction of Worship, that we may not all be obliged to turn *Quakers*, and that they will not charge the *Israelites* with downright Idolatry, when they *bowed down their Heads and worshipped the Lord and the King*, *2 Chron. xxix. 20.* Nay, if none but the supreme GOD is the Object of any kind of religious Worship, how will they, according to the Notion of those of their own side, allow Worship to be given to the Man Christ Jesus, or allow that the human Nature is taken into a Partnership or Communion in the Worship and Glory which is now due to Christ? Or how can they indeed render any Worship to Christ, which shall be due to him merely by reason of the Gift of the Father? I would willingly put it to these Men, whether if a Prince requires Homage to be paid to himself only, but as a way of expressing it, orders it to be paid to his Throne, whether he that pays it to his Throne, is not really understood by that Action to pay it to the Prince. Thus for instance GOD had among the Jews a Place which he sanctified for his own Residence and Abode, and his People were to pay their Worship to him, by directing it to that Place which so peculiarly belong'd to him. And hence the *Psalmist* calls

calls upon Men to worship his Footstool ; *Psal. xcix. 5.* which we have render'd, *Worship at his Footstool* ; but the Hebrew expresses it, just as it does in other Places, where we are bid to worship **GOD**, *Psal. xxix. 2.* and accordingly does the Septuagint render the Place as I have done. There was no Idolatry in thus worshipping the Place **GOD** had appointed, when they intended their Worship should terminate upon **GOD** himself. Nor can it be said that it was only the Presence of **GOD** in the Temple, that saved them from being guilty of Idolatry, in directing their Worship to it ; for when the Temple was destroy'd, and the Glory was departed, yet still they paid their Worship in like manner as we find by *Daniel*, Chap. vi. 10. And indeed this was the Case during the whole time of the second Temple.

My Answer then to this Argument upon the whole, is this, That he who gives to Christ the Worship which **GOD** directs, does therein punctually comply with **GOD**'s Precept, for thereby he worships the Lord his **GOD**, and serves him only ; this being the only way wherein he can truly worship and serve the Father : and he that thus honours the Son, honours the Father that sent him. If indeed we give any Worship to the Son, which has not a further reference, even to the Glory of the Father, we are then faulty ; *Phil. ii. 11.* But since all our Worship respects him as Mediator, and the Way to the Father, this Argument can be of no force at all.

VII. They further urge the Baptismal Form, *Mat. xxviii. 19.* And their Plea is, that it would be very strange if such as were not, should be joined with him who is, the supreme **GOD**, in such a solemn Act.

To this I answer, that it seems plain by St. Paul's Discourse, *i Cor. i. 12, 13, 14, 15.* that to baptize any one into another, or in his Name, imports the entering him into that Religion, of which he is the Founder or Primary Teacher, into whose Name the Person is baptized. And hence 'tis that the *Israelites* are said to have been baptiz'd into *Moses*, *i Cor. x. 2.* And according to this Notion, the Meaning of the Baptismal Form is, that Persons are enter'd into the Christian

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Religion, of which the Father is the Supreme Author, the Son the Publisher, and the Holy Ghost the great Confirmier. This, or somewhat of this nature, seems to be the Design of the Words.

But they further urge, that Persons are to be baptized in the Name, not in the Names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; whereby they think is implied, that as they have but one Essence, they have but one Name common to them all. But this is manifestly false ; for when they have criticized never so long, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost must be three distinct Names, whether they are three distinct Beings or no : Besides, how common is it for one Substantive to be put as governing several that follow it in Construction, when it must be applied to each of them distinctly ? I will make what I intend plain to the commonest Reader by an Instance ; only I shall take leave to express it, as it runs in the *Greek*, tho it may sound a little oddly in *English* : *Luke ix. 26. For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my Words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in the Glory of himself and of his Father, and of the Holy Angels.* And it may as well be argued from this Expression, that the Glory of the Father, Son, and holy Angels is but one common Glory, as it can be argued, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have but one Name.

But they insist further, that to baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, signifies the doing it by their Authority, and that the Authority is but one, and consequently these three must be one in Essence.

To which I answer, that it seems very doubtful whether the *Greek* Phrase *ei's to ὄνομα*, will bear that Sense : But let it be supposed, that it will, nay and that there is but one Authority for it ; what then must that Authority be ? Must it not be that Authority that is originally in the Father, and derived from him to the Son, and Holy Ghost ? How plain is that from the Words of Christ ? *All Power, says he, is given unto me in Heaven and Earth : Go ye THEREFORE, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name, &c.* His Authority

hori^ty therefore is what is given him, and upon that Authority he enjoins this Baptism.

Nor is it sufficient to prove their Point, that these three are joined together in so solemn an Act as baptizing. What is more solemn than to charge Men as St. Paul does; *1 Tim. v. 21. I charge thee before GOD, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels.* But will any Man infer from hence, that the elect Angels are one with the Father and Christ?

I omit their Argument from the Benediction; *2 Cor. xiii. 14. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of GOD, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.* The Answer given with reference to the Baptismal Form, may be easily apply'd to this Argument: I shall only add, that the Sense of it seems to be this; “I wish you may have the Favour of Christ, and “he being so powerful a Mediator, you cannot fail of “the Love of GOD, and this Love GOD will “certainly manifest to you, by giving you his Holy “Spirit.” Which Account is the best that I can give for the Order in which he disposes the several Parts of the Benediction.

VIII. The last of their Arguments which I shall take notice of, is the most plausible of any to a common Reader, who looks only into our English Translation: ‘Tis taken from *Philip. ii. 5, 6, 7. Let this Mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the Form of GOD, thought it not Robbery to be equal with GOD; but made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men.* If the Reader attentively considers the Passage, he cannot but perceive that the *But* in the beginning of the seventh Verse stands very unaccountably, and that St. Paul would certainly have put his Words together in a very different manner, if he had that Meaning which our Translators and many Interpreters would fasten upon them. His Expression would have run smooth, if he had thus recommended Humility to us: “Let this Mind be in you, which was also in “Christ Jesus; who being in the Form of GOD, and “thinking it no Robbery to be equal with GOD, yet “made himself of no Reputation, &c.” The common Reader

Reader may therefore by this be ready to suspect, that there is some Fault in the Translation; and 'tis much better to charge our Translators with misunderstanding St. Paul's Meaning, than to charge him with a Mistake in expressing it.

Well then may it be said, if our Translators have not hit upon the true Sense of that Text, how are we to understand it? This I shall answer in the Words of such as have writ in defence of the common Doctrine: *Archbishop Tillotson* (Serm. 2. concerning the *Divinity of our Blessed Saviour*, p. 73.) thus renders it: "Who being in the Form of *GOD*, did not arrogate to himself to be equal with *GOD*; that is, says he, he made no Ostentation of his Divinity: for this I take to be the true Meaning of that Phrase, both because 'tis so used by *Plutarch*, and because it makes the Sense much more easy and current thus: Who being in the Form of *GOD*, did not assume an Equality with *GOD*, that is, he did not appear in the Glory of his Divinity, which was hid under a Veil of human Flesh and Infirmitie." *Dr. Whitby* upon the Place says, "This Greek Phrase is only to be met with in *Plutarch*, and in *Heliodorus*; in both which Writers it plainly signifies to covet earnestly, or to look upon a thing as much to be desired and snatched at." He falls in therefore with *Schmidius*, in asserting that *ἀγαγγεῖν ιμίδαι* is *rem optatam persequi, & studioſiſſime occupare*.

In like manner is the Text understood by *Bishop Bull*, and by *Bishop Fowler* in his *Discourse of the Descent*, &c. p. 50. and by a late zealous Writer in the Cause, *Dr. Bennet*, in his *Scripture-Doctrine*, &c. p. 40, 41, 68. And, which is yet more material, as *Dr. Clarke* says, *Scripture-Doctrine*, p. 178. "In the Ecclesiastical Writers of the first three Ages, this very Text is always refer'd to, as understood by them in this Sense." To which purpose he alledges the Letter of the Churches of *Lions*, and *Vienne*, *Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. v. cap. 2. Origin*, and that very judicious Writer, *Novatian*.

I only add here, that as *Dr. Whitby* pleads earnestly, that what we render to be equal to *GOD*, imports no

more than to be like to *G O D*; so Dr. Bennet is more free in granting it, and therefore honestly gives up the Text as nothing to his purpose.

I have now gone thro my Design, which I hoped when I began, I should have brought into a much narrower Compas. If what I have said may contribute anything to the clearing Truth, or the promoting a Spirit of Meekness and Forbearance among you, 'twill be a great Satisfaction to,

Green-Court, near S. I. R.

Moorfields, Oct.

17. 1718.

Yours, Humble Servant,

E. R.

F I **N** **I** **S**.

